

The end

The bell was ringing in the tower of a little church. An old man called Caomhog stood outside. He was amazed to hear the swans talking and listened to their sad story. He brought out some holy water, which he sprinkled on the swans while he prayed. As soon as the water touched them they changed into old people. They soon died and Caomhog buried them.



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**The Children of
Lir**

Irish Legends



Once upon a time,

there was a king called Lir, who had four children named Fionnula and Aodh, Fiachra and Con. Their mother, the queen, was dead and the children missed her terribly. The king saw that the children were sad and needed a mother, so he decided to marry again. His new bride was called Aoife. She was beautiful but she was not the kind-hearted person.

Aoife grew jealous of the four children because their father loved them so much. She wanted the king all to herself so she planned to get rid of them. She asked a druid to help her and together they thought up a terrible spell. One day Aoife went to the lake where the children loved to play and she cast a terrible spell over them.



There was a flash of light and the children vanished and turned into four beautiful swans. One of the swans opened its beak and spoke with Fionnula's voice: "What have you done to us?" "I have put a spell on you and you will be swans for nine hundred years. You will spend three hundred years on this lake, three hundred on the Sea of Moyle and three hundred on the Isle of Glora. Only the sound of a church bell can break the spell," replied Aoife.

When the children did not come home that evening, the king went looking for them by the lake. He was amazed when one swan called out. "Father, father, we are your children. Aoife has placed a terrible spell on us." The king went back to the castle and pleaded with Aoife to break the spell but she refused. He decided to banish her from his kingdom. Lir spent the rest of his days beside the lake talking to his children until he grew old and died



Three hundred years passed and it was time for the swans to move to the cold and stormy Sea of Moyle between Ireland and Scotland. The poor swans were tossed about by the wild waves. It was a hard life with little food and years passed slowly.

When the time came for them to fly to the Isle of Glora, the swans were old and tired. Although it was warmer on the island and there was lots of food they were still lonely. Then one day they heard the sound they had waited for. It was the sound of a church bell.

